town and country church

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town and country church

Purposes: To encourage cooperation among rural churches • to improve local church administration in organization, finance, education, community relations, and lay leadership training • to help develop a Christian philosophy of rural life embracing ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government

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Cover

The First Baptist Church of Clarks Grove, Minnesota.

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

• Many people associate the rural church with smallness but in this issue you will learn about a church located in a hamlet of three hundred people which has an average attendance of four hundred. The First Baptist Church of Clarks Grove, Minnesota, was selected by the Central Baptist Theological Seminary as the rural Baptist Church of the year 1960.

The Convocation of the Church in Town and Country held at Denver, Colorado, October 18 through 20, was characterized as "down to earth," in not only planning and presentations but program suggestions as well. Enclosed are several reports of interest and a vital discussion by key rural leaders of "the major current issues facing the church in town and country." A new feature is the inclusion of some selected jokes which received a favorable response at the convocation.

Certainly the subject of schools is of interest to everybody; but how many people are familiar with the "folk-school" movement? Clarks Grove, Minnesota, is known for its church, but Tyler, Minnesota, is equally famous for the Danebod Folk School.

Has the rural church lost its power of influence in rural life? Not according to a recent report from North Carolina which you will read of in this issue.

Mr. Frederick S. Van Dyke, a farmer of Stockton, California, writes "an open letter to my fellow farmers," concerning the movement of unions to organize agricultural employees. This letter is a must letter for those who are concerned about the migrant ministry that was described in the November issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

There is no disputing the fact that the United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. has one of the most comprehensive and efficient Town and Country Church programs. This program is a direct result of the genius of Dr. Henry Randolph and those whom he has gathered around him. "So you may know" introduces you to the Rev. Richard K. Smith who is the new secretary in the Department of Town and Country and Indian work, succeeding Dr. Randolph as of January 1, 1961. ■ ■

Contributors of articles to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

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THE KINGDOM FIRST

by

Henry A. McCanna

• If a traveler driving north into Minnesota on highway 65 just nine miles from Albert Lea happened to glance to his left, he would note what appears to be a typical small farming village. His attention might be momentarily turned toward the new modern public school building; however, in these days, this is not an uncommon sight in many rural communities. On his right he could not miss seeing the many storage tanks and bins full of the Minnesota corn crop. And he might even breathe a silent prayer for—or complain about—God's goodness in providing this abundance. By this time he would have passed beyond what seemed to be an ordinary American scene.

What the traveler may have failed to notice about Clarks Grove is the First Baptist Church—and that is what makes Clarks Grove unusual. For if the same person were traveling on Sunday morning, the presence of such a large number of automobiles clustered around the church building would surely arouse his curiosity and cause him to turn into this village of three hundred people. The traveler's curiosity could even turn into amazement in discovering that in a rural church on an ordinary Sunday morning, 375 people were worshipping God.

It is quite probable that the stranger would be further fascinated by the cosmopolitan atmosphere into which he had come. Although there are over 125 people with either the Danish name of Jensen or Petersen, nearly every other national background would also be present. He could immediately sense that a concern for the total world pervades the membership. Local missions are also very real; recently an Indian was baptized into the membership of the church. Also six Negro children from Minneapolis were entertained in some of the members' homes for a weekend as a part of a project of the National Council of Churches for better racial understanding. The church members are primarily farmers, but some seventy-five of them work in industry in Albert Lea.

Having shared in the meaningful service of worship, which featured the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the beautiful singing of a robed choir capably led by Mr. Wyman Hanson, the visitor could again be surprised to find that the Sunday church school meets after the worship service. The purpose for this procedure is clarified when it is explained that by holding worship first, families are encouraged to be together, and by coming directly from the home the children evidence more reverence in the service. Furthermore, having church school after worship naturally makes for a better educational experience with everyone stimulated by the worship and eager for discussion.

In 1959, the Sunday church school averaged 298 in attendance. Most of the twenty-five different classes for all ages meet in a new educational building which was dedicated in April of 1959 at a cost of $97,905,000. This building contains 7,500 square feet. An additional $8,000 was also spent on improvements for the existing building. The financing of the building program was secured through three year pledges from the membership, and already the payments are ahead of schedule. The fund raising program was accomplished by some fifty consecrated laymen of the church, most of whom had already made a substantial pledge, calling on the rest of the membership. The total budget for all causes in 1959 was $45,100.

The Combining of Faith and Works

If he noticed a man in a wheelchair, the traveler's admiration for

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This study and story were compiled while Dr. McCanna was a professor at Central Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas.

this church would be increased as he learned of the churches' concern for him. Mr. and Mrs. Cornie Van Ravenhorst and their five lovely children were happily situated on a good farm near Hollandale when tragedy struck. Mr. Van Ravenhorst lost both of his legs in an accident while picking corn in the 1959 harvest. Immediately some forty men, aided by their wives, from all over the community finished harvesting the corn crop. The Clarks Grove Baptist Church started a fund and the deacons presented Mr. Van Ravenhorst a check for $1,723.90 in February of 1960. In addition, the men of the church put in his 1960 spring crop. This project is but one aspect of a total concern on the part of the land-loving members of the Clarks Grove Church for helping people stay on the land or for encouraging young people in the start of a farming career. In an area where the average investment per farm is $48,000, and the income will average about $4,200, it is not easy either to get started or to stay on the farm.

However, the Clarks Grove Church presents another startling picture to the outsider for it is not lacking in young people or young adults. This fact persists because the men of the church care enough for them to extend positive help. An illustration of such help: a few years ago, Mr. Herman Nelson decided to take his son David into full partnership with him. The Herman Nelsons moved to Clarks Grove and turned the home place over to their son. This enabled David Nelson and his wife Carol to remain in the community and continue to serve their church where both are leaders. But all of this help must be considered in terms of a statement made by the Rev. Neil Berg, "We are not building permanent bridges; rather we are ferrying people across the troubled waters of adversity until they can make their own way."

A Dynamic Youth Program

If the traveler could be present on the Fourth of July he would see that it is at the Nelson farm that the church gathers for the annual picnic. As a part of the event the young people are given an opportunity to display their skill in an automobile driving contest which the adults sponsor. In turn the youth put on a fireworks display. The visitor would find, however, that recreation is not just provided on special days, but is a continuous part of the church's program. The men's council began and maintains a complete outdoor recreation program for the whole community. On a lot in back of the church there is playground equipment, a volley ball court, and a softball diamond. In the winter this area is flooded for ice skating. Leadership is provided for the play activities and a year-round program of recreation for all ages takes place in the church basement.

Another feature of the summer program which would impress the visitor is the "Vacation Bible School." This school includes children through the ninth grade, and in 1959, there was an average attendance of 190, including 27 workers. From this school, thirteen boys and girls made their decision to become Christians. During the regular school year the pastors of the area are provided released time to teach the high school youth courses in religion. These courses include: "The Life of Christ"; "A Survey of the Bible"; and "Doctrine Plus the Practical Aspects of the Christian Life." All of the Baptist youth sign up for these courses. Boys and girls who are considering church membership participate in a pastor's class. There is also a Baptist Youth Fellowship which averages ninety in attendance.

Each Wednesday, the juniors and junior highs accompany their parents to the mid-week service and have their own meeting. The senior highs are given the "family car" to attend their meeting on Thursday nights. The stranger can easily see why the youth are so well grounded in their faith. An emphasis on sound doctrine has ever been a major factor in the steady growth of the church over the years. It is no wonder that there have been approximately 1,400 baptisms since the founding of the church.

Young people have responded to the concern of their church for them. Keeping the concerns of the Kingdom of God primary always includes a well balance program for boys and girls. Frequent parties and social activities have met their physical as well as spiritual needs. The call for young people to commit their lives to a church-related vocation has often been heard and answered. On "Life Service Sunday," January 31, 1960, a young lady dedicated herself to the cause of medical missions. This is but the newest link in a long chain which stretches over the years and includes thirty different young men and women who have gone into some phase of Christian service. These young people have gone out to serve Jesus Christ throughout the world. Such a fact helps the observer appreciate why this church maintains such an interest in missions. The Edward Paulson family alone has three of five children in a church vocation: Maurice is a missionary in Africa; Milton is a Navy chaplain; and Harris is a pastor in Illinois.

Among the others who have gone out are Professor N. P. Jensen, who started the Danish Norwegian Theological Seminary at Morgan Park, Illinois, which is now a part of Northern Baptist Seminary; Mrs. R. E. Cody, formerly Adena Sorenson, who served as a missionary in Alaska; and the Rev. Floyd Sorenson, who is the director of public relations for the Sioux Falls Baptist College. Many of the young women became pastors' wives. Surely with such a number from this church in Christian service even a stranger should not be surprised to find that there are ten different circles which make up the Women's Missionary Society; or that the "Farther Lights" packed and shipped some 530 pounds of used clothing in 1959. During the 1960 "School of Missions," there was, in addition to the 74 adults, an average attendance of 105 young people.

Diversified Leadership

In view of the fact that so many rural churches complain about the lack of men, the traveler would

probably express bewilderment at the number and quality of men serving in and through the Clarks Grove Church. These men not only maintain an extensive local program, but a large team went throughout the Baptist Association in 1959 and promoted the organizing of other men's councils. They conducted both morning and evening service in keeping with the Baptist emphasis on lay leadership.

The diaconate open their homes during the first week of the New Year for a "week of prayer." And on occasional Sunday nights after worship at the church the entire membership is divided between the homes of the parish for a family night fellowship and discussion of a subject introduced by the pastor in his sermon. There are 127 leadership positions on the committees and boards of the First Baptist Church. In the month of January alone, twenty-seven out of the thirty-one days had some church activity scheduled. However, since there is so little duplication of offices, the leaders are not overly burdened. And of greater importance is the fact that such work frees the minister to fulfill his primary responsibility as a preacher and pastor. Because leadership is held in such high regard, even a place on the nominating committee is valued.

Mr. Harold Kleinpaste typifies the dedication of the laymen of the Clarks Grove Church. He has for several years served as a leader in his own church, and for the American Baptist Convention he was chairman of the Town and Country Commission and is a member of the Board of Managers of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Mr. and Mrs. Kleinpaste made a tour of mission stations in Europe and the Near East in the summer of 1959, and Mr. Kleinpaste studied the mission work in Central America in January of 1960. The Kleinpaste family live in Hollandale, a Dutch settlement specializing in truck gardening, just seven miles east of Clarks Grove.

Another marvel startles the visitor as he learns that in the ninety-seven years of the churches' history, there have been but twelve pastors. This is especially noteworthy because the average length of service for pastors in rural Baptist churches is about two and one-half years. Even more important is the way in which each pastor has contributed to the work of his successor. It was during the ministry of the former pastor, Dr. A. C. Swenson, who served the church eleven years, that plans for a new educational building were formulated.

Prayer for Brotherly Love

O God, let brotherly love prevail between city and town, between town and village, between village and farm.

Let there be mutual forbearance, understanding and helpfulness between these several elements in the body politic.

Let brotherly love prevail between farm owner and farm tenant; let both realize their common partnership and together work the soil from which they sprang.

Let brotherly love prevail between city and country clergy and city and county congregations . . .

Let brotherly love prevail between the great religious forces of the earth.

Let there be a great-hearted readiness to believe that other roads to heaven may be as real as one's own.

Let brothers in Christ unite in a common effort to stifle the power of evil and bring in the Kingdom of God.

Let brotherly love continue between the sons of earth and the Son of God. Only so can the new heaven and the new earth be brought to birth. *Amen.*

—From *Rural Life Prayers*

In January of 1957, the Rev. Lawrence Sprankle came from a successful rural pastorate in Ohio to begin his ministry with Clarks Grove. And the hopes for a new educational building saw fruition under his leadership. The dedication of the Sprankle family to the rural church has been a dominant factor in the effectiveness of his ministry. In 1950, Mr. Sprankle was chosen "Baptist Rural Minister of the Year" by the Ohio Council of Churches and was one of the first to receive this award. For several summers, the church has paid the expenses of a young ministerial student who serves as "assistant to the pastor," and under Mr. Sprankle's direction gains valuable internship experience.

To the stranger there is no doubt that in many ways Clarks Grove is an outstanding rural Baptist church. The organizational structure is sound. Buildings and equipment are both beautiful and functional. The worship of the church is of the highest order. The use of American Baptist literature and training guides has enabled the educational program to reach a peak of efficiency. A total awareness of good stewardship is everywhere evident. The many instances of community outreach, evangelism, and missions mark this church as a spiritual force honoring her master, Jesus Christ. There is a history of consecrated and able pastors. And the extent of fellowship and recreational opportunities insures both spiritual and physical well-being. Yes, the visitor is satisfied about all these areas of apparent strength, but before traveling on he must also discover why and how this all came to be.

The Kingdom First

The Rev. Neil Berg is consulted, and it is his firm conviction that the history and guiding motivation of the Clarks Grove Baptist Church can only be understood in terms of an admonition by Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Mr. Berg served as pastor of the church from 1929 to 1937. He retired from the pastorate because of his health; however, he continued to serve his church as a denominational leader.

The records indicate that the First Danish Baptist Church began on October 11, 1863, with fifteen members in a log structure about one mile from the present site of Clarks Grove. These people had chosen well, as the good land they settled on has never seen a total crop failure. In 1876, there were 140 members and they built a new frame building. But they built a great deal more as well. Just one year later the members of the church under the

leadership of Mr. H. P. Jensen organized the "Farmers Mutual Insurance Company of Bath."

A Record of Cooperation

A further desire to serve the community prompted the members to send Mr. Jensen to Denmark in 1884, for the purpose of studying the cooperative movement. When Mr. Jensen returned, the church organized the first cooperative creamery in Minnesota on January 28, 1890. Immediately a board was organized which included Lutherans and Roman Catholics, and it became a community project. This step eventually revolutionized agriculture in their area and is a significant factor in the present strength of the church and community.

By 1894, the church had steadily increased to 307 members. In 1915, there were 330 members and they decided to move the church to Clarks Grove. The old frame building was used for some of the wood in constructing the new parsonage. They built a brick building which today is valued at $150,000. This move was a definite evidence of the vision and ability which has always characterized the leaders of this church. After the move the membership began to increase again, and now in 1960, there are 543 resident members.

It is obvious from the records that from the beginning the church took the great commission of Jesus in Matthew 28:19, 20, very seriously. They helped organize or strengthen other churches in their area and even some in other parts of the nation. Strict economy was observed so that they could better help others. An example of such economy is in the fact that during the worship services they conserved their candles by lighting them only for singing. Often members were sent out to the new areas to help these other churches. Such sacrifice was not easy but in time they proved that, "when you carry the load in missions you do not have to pressure people for local needs," or as Jesus promised in Matthew 16:25, ". . . whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

A few people cite the ethnic factor of a dominant Danish group as being the main reason for the church's strength, but if this be true, why haven't other ethnic churches so prospered? "No, it is the concern for missions which is most important," so state the Rev. Mr. Berg and others. Although Clarks Grove was a part of the Danish Baptist Conference, in recent years their association with the American Baptist Convention was so satisfactory that the Danish Conference became a part of the American Baptist Convention in 1959.

Balance Between Tradition and Change

The growth of the church has always proceeded according to the pattern established in nature. There have been several great evangelistic harvests. One of these even occurred when the church was without a pastor. But very few members have been obtained by transfer of letter, rather they have been won by patient cultivation and by direct conversion to Jesus Christ.

New projects have always been very carefully evaluated, but once proven, never neglected. In January of 1957, the church appointed a Steering Committee to formulate plans for the new educational building. Next came a Survey Committee and eventually a Building Committee of five members with Mr. Otto Norgaard serving as chairman. It took the Building Committee less than a year to do its work, but a total of three years of planning and promotion transpired before the final plans were presented to the church. Such thoroughness proved most valuable, because the plans were then approved without a single dissenting vote.

A strong feeling of wholesome competition means that a leader, even the pastor, must prove himself genuine and able. However, when there is such demonstration, appreciation and loyalty can be expected. Older leaders are yet active and appreciated through the "Silver Circle." Church school teachers are encouraged to increase their effectiveness by being provided scholarships to attend the educational laboratory schools at the American Baptist Assembly in Green Lake, Wisconsin.

Because all issues are faced with such a frank, but nevertheless congenial, openness, an outsider may be taken aback. Many solutions are obtained through the informality of the vital fellowship that accompanies the frequent (often late) "lunches" of Danish pastry and coffee. Preserving the fellowship of the church has always been considered most important.

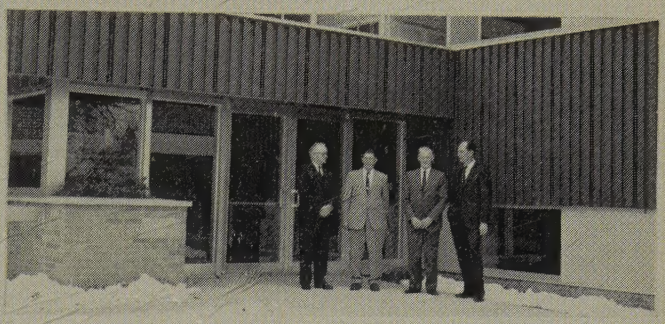
In an earlier time when the church members could not agree between two different men for pastor, they compromised by calling both of them. The ministers took turns preaching and worked together without conflict. The members assumed that good sense, understanding, and time would solve this problem—and it did! A year later, one of the men, the Rev. L. Jorgensen, decided to become a missionary to the Indians. The organizational structure of the church was very carefully and prayerfully constructed so that the church under the direction of God remains the final authority. This provision has ever protected them from extremist movements; even serving to guide them as a rudder does a ship through several storms of social and theological controversy.

Thus, the traveler can resume his journey, for he now knows why and how the First Baptist Church of Clarks Grove, Minnesota, has achieved an outstanding position as a faithful servant of her master, Jesus Christ.

The members of the First Baptist Church have conclusively demonstrated by their dedication, vision, sound judgment, ability and know-how; that a willingness to respect and learn from the valid traditions of the past, coupled with a forward-looking determination to place always the interest of the Kingdom of God first, will result in the adding of "all these things." Therefore, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas, recognized them as the outstanding rural Baptist church for the year 1960. ■ ■

The People of Clarks Grove Baptist Church

Mr. Sprankle meets with the active men's council.



New education wing with building committee members.

Mr. Sprankle visits the Van Ravenhorst family, aided by the Church when disaster struck last year.

A celebration of the Lord's Supper on a typical Sunday morning brings together the Church community.

Mr. & Mrs. Sprankle, former pastor Neil Berg, and Otto Norgaard at award banquet naming Clarks Grove as "the outstanding rural Baptist church of 1960."

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Kleinpaste and their children. Leaders in the Clarks Grove Church and the Convention, they toured missions in Europe in 1959.

A Statement presented for an insight into a movement in rural life, not necessarily representing the views of the Town and Country Church Department

An Open Letter to My Fellow Farmers

• Many of you know me personally, for I am a fifth-generation farmer here in San Joaquin County. I own land near Linden, Lodi, and on Webb Island in the Delta. I grow or have grown nearly all the major crops of this region, including grapes, plums, walnuts, tomatoes, sugar beets, asparagus and many others.

You have probably heard by now that there is a drive under way to organize the agriculture workers of the Central Valley. I am writing this letter to you because of my own interest in this organizing effort, and because of my conviction that every working farmer should be similarly interested.

AS A FARMER I WILL SUPPORT THE UNIONIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR.

Here are my reasons:

First, as a churchman, I cannot condone the fact that, in our very rich San Joaquin Valley, the largest single segment of society is living in abject poverty. As a Presbyterian elder, I must accept my sworn responsibility to relieve such a situation in whatever way legally possible. And since my church and I believe in freedom of the individual rather than control by the state, what better way is there to help these people than to encourage them to help themselves?

Second, as a citizen of this community, I anticipate a tremendous boom in our area if the income of such a large number of our people is increased. Imported laborers take home to their native land approximately three-fourths of their net U.S. earnings. Business and the entire community would profit if this money were earned and spent by twenty to thirty thousand local workers.

As a citizen of this community, I am also well aware of the indirect costs of disorganization in the farm labor market. The taxpayers of this county are paying heavily for the fact that farm work is unsteady and farm wages so low. Such disorganization leads to relief programs, slum conditions, police problems, educational retardation, emotional disorders, broken families, lack of political participation, and many other social problems. Organization of the farm labor market will help tremendously to solve these problems in San Joaquin and other agricultural counties.

Third, as a farmer, I believe that higher wages, based upon ability and training will be a great benefit to agriculture itself. Such wages will have at least two desirable results from the employer's viewpoint: (1) more farm labor will become available; (2) this labor will be of a more reliable and responsible type.

The difficulty in obtaining labor at a crucial moment of growth and harvest of a crop is a common problem among farmers. The difficulty of holding the labor force and maintaining worker standards is also very well known. I am beset with all the financial problems of other farmers. But I would pay a good wage for a well trained two-pump irrigator who would stay on the job or be replaced immediately by another, equally skilled. I would pay well for a hoeing crew which would do the job as I wanted it done, and when I wanted it done. I am not alone in my willingness to pay good wages to good workers.

It has been said that a strike at harvest would ruin the farmer. The last two years I watched my tomato crops rot in the fields because my imported crews became homesick for Mexico a month too soon. It was too late by that time to recruit local pickers. The farmer who cooperates with the agricultural workers union has at least as much to gain from the union as the union has to gain from him. Contracts signed in advance of the season could well contain no-strike clauses. As a result, the farmer would enjoy greater labor stability than he has today.

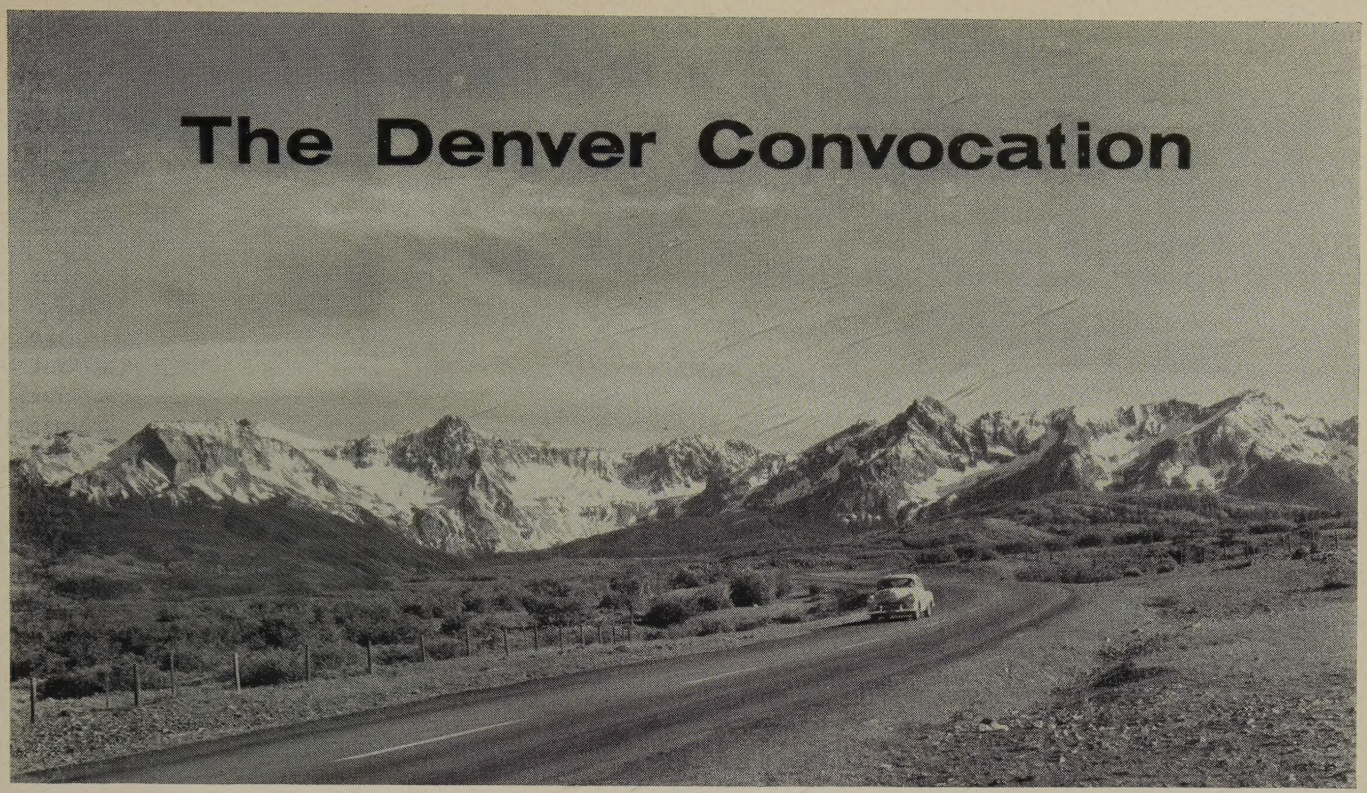
The large farming syndicates which are able to hire labor at very low wages will be the only group with a difficult period of adjustment. On the other hand, the family farm will benefit most. When prices are depressed, the small farmer cuts down on his hired help in order to save the cost of labor; he attempts to do as much of his own work as possible. He is then automatically competing for a wage in the farm labor market. With taxes to pay, machinery upkeep, and general farm overhead, he is unable to support his family on the equivalent of the wages the syndicate pays. He is forced to sell out to the syndicate.

It should be remembered that 90¢ an hour amounts to only $150 a month. I hope my fellow farmers will search their consciences and their pocketbooks, and ask themselves whether a man, his wife, and his children, can live on $150 a month.

It has been said that agriculture, operating on a narrow profit margin, cannot afford to increase wages. I firmly believe that unionization of

(*Continued on page* 13)

The Denver Convocation



• The 1960 National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country met at the First Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado, October 18-20. There were 420 registrants from 38 states and Canada, with better than a hundred more who came for special meetings. Denominations represented included Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Anglicans, the United Church of Christ, Baptists, Evangelical and United Brethren, Church of the Brethren, Church of God, Disciples, Evangelical Convenant, Lutherans, and African Methodist Episcopalians. The United Church of Christ had the largest number of people present.

Publication of Addresses

The major addresses and the discussion based on the addresses presented at the National Convocation will be published in booklet form. In some previous years, these addresses were published in the pages of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, but the current demand calls for their appearance in a separate booklet.

An advance order for more than three hundred copies of this booklet, entitled "Planning for Mission," is an indication of the value of the addresses presented to the Convocation. Further orders for "Planning for Mission" should be sent to the Town and Country Department.

Program Committee

A special word of appreciation must be given to the members of the program committee for the Denver Convocation. These included the Rev. William Davidson, chairman, Miss Cornelia Russell, the Rev. Richard K. Smith, Dr. Clayton Pepper, and the Rev. Shirley Greene.

Their work made the Convocation both possible and excellent. Dr. Conrad Hoyer must also be singled out for his distinguished service as acting director of the Town and Country Department. Along with his able and efficient secretary, Miss Ruth Lumpp, Dr. Hoyer spent over one-half of his time in the planning of the Convocation and related town and country church matters.

Who Follows Up the Convocation?

The ideas and specific plans considered are implemented in numerous ways and channels. The persons who took part in the Denver meeting are the first and foremost line of implementation. These men and women live in rural communities. They are pastors and lay people in local churches. They are administrators of numerous denominational and interdenominational agencies. They are teachers and writers, and students in colleges and seminaries.

The local and state councils of churches have special responsibilities for furthering the cooperative aspects of the Convocation's ideas and plans. There is an extensive follow-up through the religious press and news services. The daily press calls attention to Convocation highlights.

Nationally, a responsibility for follow-up rests upon the various town and country church departments of the constitutent denominations and also their agencies of religious education. Your Department of Town and Country Church of the NCC is the national clearing house for interdenominational programs, and it has responsibility for those aspects of the Convocation's recommendations requiring national collaboration among the religious bodies.

Issues of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are, we hope influential in implementation.

Henry A. McCanna

The Lighter Side of Planning For Mission

Inasmuch as the Convocation dealt with Planning there were a number of "planning" (not planned) jokes which are herein recorded for your use or misuse.

• When the very latest airplane had traveled for a while, the intercom came on, and the passengers heard the voice of the pilot say, "You are on a very historic flight as I am on the ground directing your plane by a remote mechanical operation. But you have nothing to worry about as everything is under control, under control, under control. . . ."

• A man spent months training his bird to talk. He then sent it to his mother as a present. Later he talked to her and asked if she liked the bird. "Oh, yes," she said, "it was delicious."

"You didn't eat that bird, did you? Why he speaks seven languages."

She replied, "Well, why didn't it say something?"

• Jack Waldrep told of a farmer who was famed for his horrible cussing. One day a wagon load of produce turned over spilling all the produce, smashing the wagon, and killing the horse. People gathered around him and wondered what he would say. But he just huffed and puffed several times and finally said, "Folks I'm sorry, but I'm just not equal to the occasion."

• Jack also claims that only the laymen will fully enjoy eternity. The preachers will have to leave a few moments before it's over.

• Dr. Hoyer instanced the man who wanted the cuffs of his pants shortened. He successively failed to get his daughter, his wife, and his mother-in-law to do the task. However, when he left for work each one felt guilty and each one proceeded to do the job. When he returned home he found his pants were now too short. He thanked them all for their efforts, but although he got real cooperation, what he needed was coordination. Planning is a process, not a product.

• In commenting on his new job, Dr. McCanna was reminded of the bandit who accosted a man and said, "Stick em up—or else." The man retorted, "Or else what?"

To which the bandit replied, "Please mister, don't confuse me, this is my first job!" ■ ■

THE CALF PATH by Sam Foss

One day, through the primeval wood,
A calf walked home, as good calves should;
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail as all calves do.

Since then two hundred years have fled,
And, I infer, the calf is dead.
But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;
And then a wise bellwether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And he drew the flock behind him, too
As good bellwethers always do.

And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Thru those old woods a path was made;
And many men wound in and out,
And dodged, and turned, and bent about
And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path.

But still they followed—do not laugh—
The first migrations of that calf,
And thru this winding wood-way stalked,
Because he wobbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane,
That bent, and turned, and turned again;
This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his load
Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And traveled some three miles in one,
And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on in swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street;
And this, before men were aware,
A City's crowded thoroughfare;
And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis;
And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed the zigzag calf about;
And 'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.

A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.
They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;
For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.

A moral lesson this might teach,
Were I ordained and called to preach;
For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-paths of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beated track,
And out and in, and forth and back,
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.

But how the wise old woods could laugh,
Who saw the first primeval calf!
Ah! many things this tale might teach,—
But I am not ordained to preach.

There is a tradition that the city described in "The Calf Path" is New York City, and the street (path) is Broadway.

This poem was quoted by Mr. William Stucky at the close of his speech to the Convocation. As Dr. Hoyer promised, it is here reprinted for your enjoyment.

CHECKING THE PROGRAM *of the 1960 National Convocation of the Church in Town and Country are Dr. Conrad Hoyer, associate executive secretary, NCC Division of Home Missions, Dr. Henry McCanna, executive director, its Department of Town and Country Church, and Dr. Victor Obenhaus, professor, Chicago Theological Seminary. Dr. Obenhaus delivered a major address and participated in panel discussions.*

Joint Meeting Highlights

• For the first time the Department of Town and Country Church and professors of Town and Country Work met jointly on Monday, October 17. In the morning there was a panel presentation of the major current issues facing the church in town and country. Panel members included Dr. Henry Randolph, Miss Cornelia Russell, Dr. Clayton Pepper, Dr. Mark Rich, and Dr. Henry McCanna. Moderator of the panel was Dr. Conrad Hoyer.

In the afternoon there were two presentations. Dr. Victor Obenhaus reported on an "Analysis of Religious Life in a Midwest County" and Mr. Phillip Aylesworth of the Federal Extension Service discussed "In-Service Training at Land-Grant Colleges."

The evening session was given over to the work of CREST (committee on rural economic and social trends) and its relation to theological education. The Rev. William Davidson is its chairman and presented the work of CREST.

Dr. C. R. McBride, professor, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas, was chosen to succeed to Dr. Mark Rich as chairman of the Association of Professors of Town and Country Work.

Discussion of Major Issues

At the meeting of the Town and Country Department, the panel presentation and discussion of major issues confronting the church in town and country was as follows:

1. Cooperation

Dr. Henry Randolph stated that from his standpoint a satisfactory program of cooperation on the local level, with leadership that is competent to lead a community into a well-rounded town and country program, was most needed. There is much overlapping and duplication of effort which impoverishes the local community. In some cases the situation is worse than fifty years ago. This is perhaps due to the increase of "splinter groups" within Christianity.

There is good cooperation on the national level by some seventeen denominations, but more must be included, he declared.

2. Grouping

Miss Cornelia Russell indicated that the greatest issue is one of effective patterns for grouping churches to provide an adequate load and support for the pastor; coupled with this is the problem of securing ministers who are oriented to more than a one-church situation. In commenting on this problem it was brought out that there is a defeatist attitude in recruiting ministers. The churches now want the best or nothing.

Miss Russell stressed that there are many women who are competent to minister, especially those trained in community work. Perhaps one

reason the communists have forged ahead so fast is that they do not hesitate to utilize women in any task. Professor Colvin Baird wants the laymen to rediscover the meaning of the church as they serve under the administration of a pastor. The pastor would have overall responsibility for several churches. Dr. Ben Cain noted there is a tendency to get better training for rural ministers from In-Service Training.

Dr. Selwyn Smith called attention to the American Baptist plan of appointing men as home missionaries, who will agree to dedicate themselves to town and country. Leadership will be forthcoming when the challenge is great enough, according to Dr. Conrad Hoyer.

Quite a bit of time was given over to the idea of "area coverage." Dr. Rich felt that the position has shifted, and that too many denominations are only concerned with their own area and not that of the total. None of the plans in the past twenty years are truly community in scope, but only cooperation of denominational churches.

Dr. Randolph was of the opinion that there is more cooperation than ever before; that under the group ministry plans, there is more specific progress than under the former broad community basis. Because the area idea bogged down, the Rev. Mr. Greene indicated it was more practical to work the denominational approach. Dr. Hoyer stated that we can have the denominational emphasis and still cover the area, for the church transcends any denominational expression of it.

3. Values

Dr. Clayton Pepper felt that we need to determine and emphasize the valid rural values in our society, which is being greatly urbanized.

He also pointed to a number of cultural pockets and regions which are in need of special attention. The urbanizing process has caused us to lose thrust about the values of the town and country movement. Notation was made that Paul Johnson, editor of the *Prairie Farmer*, welcomes the suburban movement as millions of people are in the process of rediscovering rural (traditional) values. However, as Dr. Dale Medearis indicated, many of these are pagan values.

The Rev. Lonnie Hass desired a new philosophy to surplant the false "cult of the soil." Attention was called to the forthcoming book by Shirley Greene, *Ferment on the Fringe*. This book is about churches who have been successful in making needed adjustments in transitional communities.

4. Self Concept

The church must accept the concept of itself as a social institution, according to Dr. Mark Rich. To do this there must also be a movement from a "folk" to a "biblical" religion. And there must be the acceptance of the "group process." There is a widespread feeling that the church is divine—a fellowship. Yet in rural life the people look upon the church (only) as an institution, depending primarily on human resources. All over America, church people are too much obsessed by their "dream church." Thus a church of seventy-five to a hundred members "dreams" it can have a full program with an outstanding pastor. It is probable that a church of less than one hundred members should meet in a home and not try to maintain a separate building.

The Rev. Shirley Greene noted that a person without food becomes obsessed with the idea of food—so with the church—at a meager level it cannot afford to fulfill its dream; for example, a church of a hundred members expecting fifty men at the brotherhood meeting. As Dean Robert Frerichs has asked, "What are the minimum things a church must have to be a church?" And as the Rev. Richard K. Smith pointed out, there must be a study of the image of the church.

In addition to the main areas of discussion there were also other issues indicated by:

Lonnie Hass . . . .
A whole new philosophy of rural life must be stated. Morale must be raised.

Richard Smith . . . .
Planning must involve a total strategy and the whole world.

Phillip Aylesworth . . . .
The implications of change for rural life.

Colvin Baird . . . .
The influx of new ethnic groups.

Dale Medearis . . . .
The threat to individuality posed by an overdependence on the group process and the expert. The church needs to help the individual recover his role in a mass society.

Henry Randolph . . . .
The adequate churching of the rural community.

Victor Obenhaus . . . .
The concept of "rural" church inhibiting the church concept.

Cornelia Russell . . . .
The problem of ministering to the total family.

Louis Myers . . . .
How to serve a mobile population.

Shirley Greene . . . .
The adjustments of the church in a transitional area.

C. R. McBride . . . .
How to get these insights into the thinking of the local church. ■ ■

Order Your Copy of
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Addresses and Discussion at the National Convocation in Denver

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BOY SCOUT AWARD FOR RURAL CHURCHES—*The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America honored the 1960 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country with a special plaque of appreciation for rural church cooperation with the Boy Scout movement. Presenting the plaque was Ernest C. Hogan, Jr. (left), New Brunswick, New Jersey, assistant director of Protestant relationships for the Boy Scouts. Shown with Mr. Hogan is the Rev. Henry A. McCanna. A new booklet, "Scouting and Town and Country Churches," is now available from the Boy Scout office.*

An Open Letter . . .

(*Continued from page* 8)

farm labor will prod farmers into organizing groups on their own behalf in order to receive higher prices for their products. This would be a revolutionary step in the history of agriculture—and one of the most desirable. It is basic to our way of life that groups of people organize in their own interest, and this applies to farm employers and farm employees alike.

Industry has accepted unionization and adjusted to it. In most cases, this acceptance has paid dividends of a more stable, better qualified, and more productive labor force. I have no doubt the same will happen in agriculture.

I have come to these conclusions slowly, after much thought and many years of study. I realize that some of my friends and colleagues will disagree with my conclusions. Some will not even try to understand what I say here. However, having spent a lifetime associating with farmers, I believe I can say most of them are fair-minded, reasonable men. I am confident that many of my fellow working farmers will, upon reflection, agree with me that the organization of farm workers is an eminently fair and reasonable development, and will, in fact, prove to be the spur which saves agricultural employers from their own disorganization and weakness.

I feel it is my duty, as a farmer, a citizen, and a man of God, to attempt to instill my influence into this new union so that it may better become a strong force for the good of workers, employers, and all society. I trust other farmers, citizens, and men of God will join me in this effort. I feel it is my duty, also, to make my stand public, through this open letter, in order that some, at least, may learn from my observations and accept, rather than fight, a movement they will never halt.

FREDERICK S. VAN DYKE
Van Dyke Ranch
Copperopolis Road
Stockton, California

Rural Life Sunday

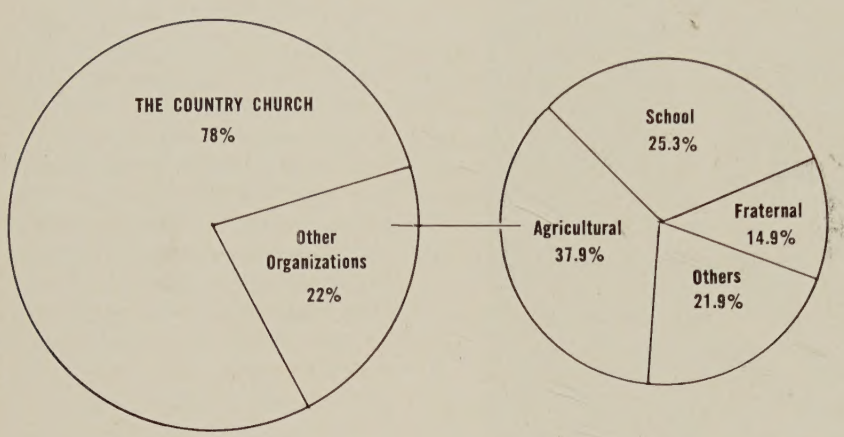
• Make your plans now to observe *Rural Life Sunday* on May 7. This ancient rural festival is also known as Rogationtide. The traditional time for this solemn celebration is the fifth Sunday after Easter. In recent years a number of people have indicated their hope that a fixed date might be established. I would be glad to hear of your preference.

As a service to the denominations and the churches, the Town and Country Department each year prepares an order of worship for *Rural Life Sunday*. This year, the author of the service is Miss Cornelia Russell, Secretary of the Department of Work in Home Fields of the Board of Missions, The Methodist Church. Copies of this service may be obtained from the Office of Publication and Distribution of the National Council of Churches.

Henry A. McCanna

The No. 1 Rural Influence

by Selz C. Mayo



• From the point of view of time involved, the rural church is still the strongest motivating force in rural North Carolina. Other types of organizations are directly reaching only a very small number of rural people.

These are among the significant conclusions that can be drawn from a recent survey of 435 families in two rural communities of Wake County. Purpose of the study was to determine the types of organizations in which rural people participate, and the amount of participation.

Method of Study

All persons ten years of age and over were included in the survey. Social participation scores were computed by means of the Chapin Scale. (F. Stuart Chapin, "Social Participation Scale," 1937.) In this scale, weights are assigned to various activities within an organization as follows: membership (1), attendance (2), contribution (3), committee membership (4), and officer (5).

The final and total score for an individual was obtained simply by adding the weights for activities in all organizations.

Church Participation

Religious activities account for more than three-fourths (78 per cent) of the total participation in formal organizations in these two survey communities. For the white population, 77.3 per cent of the total score was in religious activities. This compares with 79.3 per cent for the Negro population.

In the farm population, 80 per cent of the total score was in religious activities. The corresponding proportion for non-farm households was 75.3 per cent. Among farm owner households, 77.4 per cent of the total score was in religious activities as compared with 82.2 per cent for the tenant and sharecropper populations.

The breakdown by race showed that 80.5 per cent of the participation among white owner families was in religious activities as compared with 72.1 per cent in the Negro owner families. Among tenant and sharecropper households, 85.9 per cent of the participation of white families was in religious organizations as compared with 81.2 per cent for the non-white tenants and sharecroppers.

Other Activities

If church activities comprise three-fourths of the total, what about the other 20 to 25 per cent?

For all persons covered in this survey, 39.7 per cent of the participation in activities other than religious was in agricultural organizations. (Percentages based on total scores in non-religious activities.) In white families, 38.1 per cent of the participation was in agricultural organizations as compared with 42.7 per cent for Negro families. The remainder of the participation score was distributed as follows:

School, 25.3 per cent; patriotic organizations, 4.5 per cent; lodge or fraternal organizations, 14.9 per cent; civic clubs, 0.8 per cent; scouts, 7.9 per cent; and all others, 6.9 per cent.

Conclusions

It may be concluded that rural people continue to give to the rural church the largest part of their time allotted to organizations. Hence, the quality of rural society may be said to depend largely on the complexion of the rural church. Certainly, rural leaders who want to see the people adopt new and improved methods of farming and homemaking should cooperate closely with the rural church.

A second conclusion that can be drawn is that types of organizations other than churches are reaching only a very small number of rural people. Farm organizations are directly affecting only a small proportion of the rural population. The PTA, as another example, is relatively unimportant in the lives of these people.

Either leaders of the various organizations have done a poor job of promotion, or the people of these communities have not seen the important values to be gained from participation in the organizations available. Both factors are probably involved. In any event, if it is desirable for rural people to affiliate with organizations outside of the church, then a tremendous task lies ahead for agricultural leaders in rural Wake County and in similar areas. ■ ■

An Excerpt from *Research and Farming*, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Raleigh, October 1949. Dr. Mayo is head of the rural sociology department, North Carolina State College.

Danebod Folk School

• Danebod Folk School, Tyler, Minnesota, has stated as its purpose: To serve as a center for rural culture and education, creative folk living, recreational leadership, and community development; in face of the fact that too many of our young people in rural areas are leaving the land for the lure of the big city, we aim to stress the value of rural living, to develop pride in farming, and to foster in rural people a love for their land, their communities and homes, their country and their God.

The Folk School Tradition

The spiritual father of the folk school movement is N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), sometimes called "the prophet of the North." This Danish poet, preacher, historian, and patriot believed that "every Dane should be an enlightened, useful citizen."

The folk schools of Denmark were not vocational. Their aim was not to train farmers and clerks and mechanics. Their main object was to lay a foundation for a fuller and richer life. But Grundtvig believed that when a pupil was awakened to a conscious realization of his own worth and potentialities as an individual, he would also become a better farmer, or clerk, or mechanic.

There were in the folk schools no academic entrance requirements, no examinations or grades, no diplomas and no degrees. Grundtvig believed with Kristen Kold, his contemporary colleague, in democratic education, that the school was to teach its pupils "to love God, their neighbor, and their country."

Danebod Folk School

Danebod Folk School was built in 1888 by Danish immigrants under the leadership of the Rev. H. J. Pedersen, the founder of Ashland Folk School at Grant, Michigan.

The school followed the traditional pattern of the Danish folk schools with a three-month session each winter for men and a summer session for girls.

Since most of the students were from Denmark, the language was, of course, exclusively Danish. Following World War I and the resultant decrease in immigration, the enrollment gradually diminished, and by 1931, the school was closed.

The Folk School Association, however, continued to function and under the leadership of the Rev. Holger Strandskov, an attempt was made in the middle thirties to begin an American Folk School, but again in 1940, the school ceased to function and the main building was left to decay.

In the fall of 1945, group meetings were held throughout the Tyler community, and it was decided to restore Danebod again. A financial campaign brought in more than $6,500,000. Through the following winter and spring, skilled workers and volunteers repaired the building. By spring, 1946, Danebod was again in use. In June, about eighty children were taught religion, singing, folk dances, and gymnastics. In addition, the buildings are regularly used as a center for many community activities. It is open to any organization whose aims and purposes are in harmony with the folk school program.

Approach

Danebod Folk School, a direct descendant of the folk schools of Denmark, recognizes, however, that differences in circumstances demand a different approach. In Denmark, the average rural pupil, who graduates at the age of 14 to enter farming or an apprenticeship, is ready at 17 or 18 to complement his training with a course at the folk school. Here in America, on the other hand, where most people go to school until they are 18, a three-month course has been found infeasible.

Danebod Folk School offers short courses in cultural and cooperative living, not only for young people, but for all age groups, including courses in recreation, folk dancing, games, singing, literature, art, history, crafts, anything, in short, "which will enrich the lives of the individual participants as well as the communities from which they come. ■ ■

N.E.A. Convention

• Your director attended some of the sessions of the convention of County and Rural Area Superintendents of Public Schools held at Louisville, Ky., October 9-12.

The people and mood of that convention were characterized by a wholesome openness, coupled with a genuine sense of purpose and know-how. In the push to get outstanding teachers, buildings, equipment, and transportation, one could not help but wonder how much the rural church is matching this zeal!

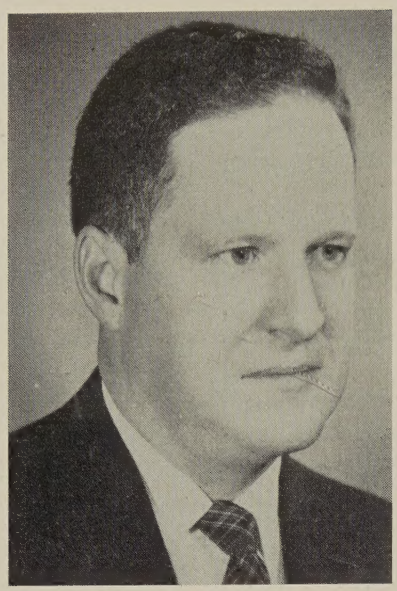
It was stated that "Men today can fly higher and swim deeper than all other creatures, and yet are still unable to be at harmony with each other." Surely the church has an answer which must be heard! But it will only be heard when the people speak. And people only take an interest in an organization when they have opportunity to contribute to significant decisions and changes.

There was an excellent presentation of the "College in the Country." The West Georgia State College of Carrollton, Georgia, goes to the community with lectures and discussion groups and even takes its students on bus trips around the nation. The director of this program is Collus O. Johnson.

It was pointed out most significantly, that the neglecting of the education of rural people accounts for much of the tension that exists internationally today. In helping to meet this need, one gets the impression that the rural department is probably the most effective unit currently functioning in the National Education Association.

Henry A. McCanna

so you may know - - -



RICHARD K. SMITH

• The Rev. Richard K. Smith is secretary of the Department of Town and Country Church—Indian Work of the Board of National Missions, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The town and country department is responsible for services to towns of less than 10,000 population, villages and rural areas, including work among Indian Americans. The denomination's mission program in town and open country areas is a link in a network of schools, hospitals, community centers, churches and other projects scattered over the United States and the West Indies.

Mr. Smith had been associate secretary of the department before January 1, 1961, when he succeeded the Rev. Dr. Henry Randolph as secretary.

In his work as secretary for the national missions town and country and Indian program, Mr. Smith makes special studies and counsels with churchmen in towns and rural areas where families do not necessarily farm for a living.

He is liaison between the mission agency and presbyteries and larger parishes, which link the resources of several churches through a local council; he also helps to develop and strengthen programs geared to particular needs of open country and town churches. In addition he participates in convocations, institutes, conferences, and other in-service training programs for town and country church leaders.

Before taking up responsibilities in the national missions headquarters in New York in June, 1957, Mr. Smith was for three years assistant to the general presbyter and field assistant in national missions in the Synod of Washington. He represented the synod in the planning and strategy department of the Washington-Northern Idaho Council of Churches, edited the synod paper, helped to organize a department of town and country church in the state council and was the first department chairman.

He was also executive secretary of Presbyterian Ministries, a corporation established by the synod to develop a ministry to older people.

From 1950 to 1954, he was minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Ephrata, Washington. Under his leadership the church building was completed and the membership increased. His church was one of twenty-one pilot churches selected to tell the story of tithing. It was also chosen for a special study and evaluation of leadership training techniques. Mr. Smith belonged to the local Rotary Club and the Grant County mental health and TB organizations.

A native of Eugene, Oregon, he was graduated from Oregon State College in Corvallis.

His ministerial training was taken at Yale; while a student there he was director of Christian education for the First Presbyterian Church, Greenwich, Connecticut. ■ ■

Dr. Henry Randolph: An Appreciation

• One of the truly great leaders of the Town and Country Church is the Rev. Dr. Henry S. Randolph, retired secretary, Town and Country Church, United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. There is no calculating the service which Henry Randolph has rendered rural churches of not only his own, but of all the denominations sharing in the National Council of Churches.

In addition to his own heavy responsibilities, he has been the guest editor for this journal, and would have become acting director of the department had not a permanent director been secured.

Dr. Randolph has reached the age of formal retirement and was succeeded by his present associate, the Rev. Richard K. Smith, on December 31, 1960. In appreciation for his years of significant service, Dr. Randolph was deluged with appropriate gifts at the Pan-Presbyterian Convocation of the Church in Town and Country held at Louisville, Kentuckey, November 1-3.

The autumn issue of "The Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin" contains an address by Dr. Randolph, "The Challenge of the Beckoning Seventies." It is the conviction of this writer that Henry Randolph will himself remain active in helping to meet many of the challenges which his address cites.

Readers will also want to purchase the booklet, "Planning for Mission," which contains the splendid speech presented by Dr. Randolph to the National Convocation held in Denver.

Henry A. McCanna